CHAPTER 5

Vocabulary and Concepts

PURPOSE

The purpose of this chapter is to foster an understanding that teaching words well means giving students multiple opportunities to learn how words are conceptually related to one another in the material they are studying.

UNDERLYING CONCEPTS

1. By teaching and reinforcing concept words in relation to other content related words, teachers can help students build conceptual knowledge of content area terms.

2. Teachers who activate what students know about words based on the students’ experiences, enhance their ability to read and understand content subject matter.

3. Using graphic organizers is an effective way to help students make connections among words.

4. Teachers who reinforce and extend concepts with word related activities assist students’ understanding of content subject matter.

STUDENT OBJECTIVES

1. Students will appreciate why content related language should be taught within the context of concept development.

2. Students will gain an understanding of the relationships among experiences, concepts, and words.

3. Preservice teachers will demonstrate a variety of ways in which teachers can activate what students know about words.

4. Preservice teachers will demonstrate their ability to design vocabulary extension activities that help students refine their conceptual knowledge of special and technical vocabulary.

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ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Prereading

1. Using the graphic organizer at the beginning of the chapter, explain how the content of the chapter relates to the chapter title.

2. Have students brainstorm recollections about how they were taught vocabulary. List the strategies and have students rank them as positive or negative. Use the list as a springboard for discussion on effective teaching strategies that engage students in learning.

3. Read the following scenario to the students: You are a middle school teacher and you have students who struggle with reading new words. What three strategies from the chapter might you choose to help your students in working with words?

4. Provide the students with a list of vocabulary words from this chapter and have them brainstorm ways they might learn the words. Use the ideas as a springboard for discussing the importance of providing students with ways to learn how words are related to concepts.

5. Write the word “line” in the centre of the chalkboard. Have students in their content area groups brainstorm their experiences/understandings (e.g. what does a line mean in a music class? language arts class?) and record their responses around the word. Use the activity as a springboard for discussion on how prior experiences influence how one connects to vocabulary and how a word can shift in meaning from one context to another.

6. Selected true – false statements and/or multiple choice test questions might be used as a pre-assessment.

7. Selected true – false statements might be used as a springboard for discussion and to determine student prior knowledge.

During Reading

8. Using steps 1-4 under Constructing Graphic Organizers in the chapter, have the students work in pairs and design a graphic organizer based on a chapter from a content area text of their choice. The students can design the graphic organizer on large chart paper, share with the whole class, and as they explain how the concepts are related.
9. Have students bring magazines and/or newspapers to class. Distribute 12 index cards to each student. Have each student cut 12 large print words from the magazines and newspapers and glue each word to an index card. In small groups of three or four, have the students examine all of the words in the group and arrange them conceptually. Students can also display the conceptual arrangement on an overhead transparency to share.

After Reading

10. After reading about graphic organizers, have the students construct one based on the Table of Contents from a content area text of their choice.

11. After reading about the Word Exploration strategy, model the strategy for the students using the word, “metacognition.” Model by writing and thinking aloud using the overhead projector. Have students work in pairs to practice the strategy using words of they have selected from content area texts.

12. Have the students select a vocabulary strategy from the chapter and try it in a real classroom of middle or high school students. Alternately, have one group of content area students (e.g. science) work with another content area group (e.g. Art). Following the activity, have the students write their observations regarding its effectiveness. Share findings in class.

13. Have the students construct a Word Sort based on terms in a chapter or unit from a content textbook. Partner with classmates to see how it works.

14. Have students bring a content textbook that has a glossary to class. Have the students examine related words based on prefixes and roots and then design graphic organizers based on those words.

15. After reading about the Semantic Feature Analysis (SFA) strategy, have students design one based on content area chapter.

16. Have students bring human interest stories from the newspaper to class. After selecting a story, have each student design 4 concept circles based on the selection. Share in a small group setting.

17. Have each student bring a content area text to class. Have them examine how the author uses context clues to explain new concepts. Does the author use definitions? Examples? Synonyms? Share in a small group setting.

18. After reading about Modified Cloze Passages in the text, have the students design one based on an informational article from a magazine. Students can trade cloze passages, complete them, and discuss the process.
19. After reading how to create a Magic Square in the text, have the students design one in small groups based on current events. Groups can then trade Magic Squares to see how they work.

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SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

True/False Test Items

___ 5.1 There is little connection between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension.

Answer: F

___ 5.2 Learning vocabulary should be a separate activity from learning academic content.

Answer: F

___ 5.3 Teaching words well means giving students an opportunity to learn the definition of words.

Answer: F

___ 5.4 For every concept, there are examples.

Answer: T

___ 5.5 Graphic organizers do not work well in middle grades.

Answer: F

___ 5.6 Graphic organizers build a frame of reference for students as they approach new material.

Answer: T

___ 5.7 List-group-label activity asks students to explore what they know about a word by writing in their learning logs.

Answer: F
5.8 Open word sorts encourage students to categorize vocabulary words with predetermined categories.

Answer: F

5.9 Open word sorts promote divergent and inductive reasoning.

Answer: T

5.10 Brainstorming is a post reading activity implemented to categorize words based on their definition.

Answer: F

5.11 Words are labels for concepts.

Answer: T

5.12 Concept circles provide an opportunity for studying words critically by having students relate words conceptually to one another.

Answer: T

5.13 OPIN is a content and definition related activity.

Answer: T

5.14 Vocabulary reinforcement activities should always be undertaken after formal lessons to enhance learning.

Answer: F

5.15 When students examine a list of vocabulary words to determine which word does not belong, they are manipulating words at the conceptual level.

Answer: T

5.16 As a rule of thumb, reinforcing and extending vocabulary should be completed in small groups or in the class as a whole and then completed individually.

Answer: F

5.17 Concepts are learned through the acting upon and interaction with the environment.

Answer: T
Multiple Choice

5.1. Which of the following is not a purpose of vocabulary development in content area reading?
   a. to remove barriers to students' understanding of text
   b. to promote acquisition of the language of a content area
   c. to promote English development
   d. to build a relationship between word knowledge and reading comprehension.

Answer: c

5.2 Which of the following is not considered a reinforcing and extending concept strategy?
   a. concept circles
   b. word exploration
   c. semantic feature analysis
   d. magic squares

Answer: b

5.3 Which of the following is not considered a reinforcing and extending concept strategy?
   a. brainstorming
   b. categorization
   c. concept circles
   d. OPIN

Answer: a

5.4 Which of the following does not activate what students know about words?
   a. graphic organizer
   b. knowledge rating scale
   c. semantic map
   d. list-group-label

Answer: a

5.5 Which of the following strategy promotes active vocabulary development?
   a. defining
   b. sorting
   c. memorizing
   d. testing

Answer: b
5.6 Which of the following is not associated with conceptual development?
   a. creating mental images
   b. grouping by feature
   c. spelling
   d. direct experience

Answer: c

5.7 _________ are frameworks that use content vocabulary to help students
   anticipate concepts and their relationships to one another in the reading material.
   a. word sorts
   b. magic squares
   c. graphic organizers
   d. OPIN

Answer: c

5.8 In the word exploration strategy the teacher should focus least on:
   a. freewriting
   b. log entries
   c. connections between words and the students' prior knowledge
   d. spelling and punctuation

Answer: d

5.9 In content area vocabulary development teacher should rely upon:
   a. open word sorts
   b. closed word sorts
   c. both open and closed word sorts
   d. neither open nor closed word sorts

Answer: c

5.10 Vocabulary activities can be designed to give a class the experience to:
   a. think about, think under, think with the technical vocabulary of a subject
   b. think about, think through, think with the technical vocabulary of a subject
   c. think above, think under, think with the technical vocabulary of a subject
   d. think above, think through, think with the technical vocabulary of a subject

Answer: b
5.11 The __________ strategy encourages students to "argue" one's responses in a group discussion to lead to continued motivation and vocabulary development.
   a. open word sort
   b. semantic feature analysis
   c. think pair share
   d. OPIN

Answer: d

5.12 Concepts are organized into hierarchies according to:
   a. class, example, and attribute
   b. example, function, and schema
   c. attribute, system, and structure
   d. structure, context, and function

Answer: a

5.13 Basic cognitive operations relied upon to develop conceptual relationships are:
   a. joining, learning, selecting
   b. joining, learning, matching
   c. joining, matching, selecting
   d. joining, excluding, selecting

Answer: d

ESSAY QUESTIONS

Essay questions include a mixture of questions designed (1) to help students apply and synthesize ideas, and (2) to help students clarify and understand ideas.

5.1 Discuss the following statement: "Vocabulary is as unique to a content area as fingerprints are to a human being."

5.2 Teachers can help students build conceptual knowledge of content area terms by teaching and reinforcing the concept words in relation to other concept words. Discuss how you will develop this conceptual knowledge. Specify specific strategies you plan to implement and justify.

5.3 From a strategic perspective, discuss the two questions all readers must ask themselves about their own vocabulary development.

5.4 Choose ten vocabulary words you plan on developing for a content area lesson. Discuss what prereading strategies you will use to develop the vocabulary words and the process you will follow to implement the strategies.
5.5 Suppose that one of your colleagues has been spending a great deal of time creating vocabulary worksheets that require matching and filling in the blanks. What alternative vocabulary strategies would you suggest to your colleague to develop technical and special terms? Discuss why you chose the alternative strategies.

5.6 You have been asked to share some strategies for developing content area vocabulary at a faculty meeting. Prepare a handout in the form of a lesson plan describing objectives, materials, procedures, and expected outcomes for any two of the strategies described in this chapter.

Chapter 5
VOCABULARY AND KEY TERMS

brainstorming
concept circles
general vocabulary
graphic organizer
knowledge ratings
list-group-label
magic squares
modified cloze passages
OPIN
semantic feature analysis
semantic word map
special vocabulary
technical vocabulary
word sorts (open, closed)